6; Tomasic E-4 (1947-1948) 1953 RF1 Great Russia RF1

level violence was manifested in frequent beatings of wife and children, and on the rural community level in habitual drunkenness that often ended in brawls and even murder.[18] In conditions which foster human degradation and lack of trust, both self-seeking and vindictiveness flourish. Hence the Great-Russian peasant was inclined to commit atrocious acts of revenge against people whom he considered as his persecutors or who caused him any harm. When threatening with revenge the Great-Russian peasant was likely to say: "You will pay me with your own blood" (*Ty u menya kroviyu svoey umoeshsya*). Killing as a revenge, burning hay-ricks, barns and homes was a common occurrence. The peasants were likely to organize a collective hunt against real or fancied malefactors and mutilate them or put them to death by means of torture:

> For murder and robbery, death of the culprit—sometimes with mutilation by cutting and tearing off of various parts of his body. For horse-theft and grand larceny they practice sometimes hammering of iron nails into the head and forcing of wooden pins under the nails and also merciless beating even onto death; . . . in some instances the case ends by maiming the thief and letting him go.[19]

At the same time the frontiersmen and professional warriors, such as the Cossacks, became renowned and widely admired because of their deeds of vindictiveness and violence. War was a great opportunity for people with such inclinations. As Gogol has put it, the Cossacks found a great delight in "accumulating booty from raided towns, putting the villages and the fields on fire, and spreading their glories by far and wide throughout the steppe" in order "to revenge themselves for all evil and humiliation."[20] There were numerous robber and Cossack songs which told about such exploits, and expressed desire for vindictiveness and destructive aggression.

Destructive aggression was nursed on the patriarchal family level and reinforced by conditions in the local community. Thus as soon as the controls of the authorities would weaken, mass revolts would come into the open. Such a behavior in turn was used by the local authorities as a justification for their strictness in dealing with the peasants:

6: Tomasic E-4 (1947-1948) 1953 RF1 Great Russia: RF1

565 The speeches of the peasants' deputies
423 in the second Duma unmistakably show that the peasants con-
[646] sidered that the land belonged to them and to nobody else and that the times of degrading oppression were over. They declared themselves in favor of the free distribution of all the land that was in the possession of the nobility, the Church, and the state:

> We are talking of land these days as of nothing else. We are told it is a sacred, inviolate possession. I think if the people want it, there can be no inviolateness about it. Gentlemen of the nobility! You think we have forgotten the time when you used us as stakes in playing at cards and exchanged us for dogs! We know we were your sacred inviolate property. But the land has been stolen from us. The peasants who have sent me here have said that the land is ours! We have come here not to buy but to take it.[14]

169 Because of such beliefs and ideas which were intensified by
565 systematic revolutionary propaganda of professional conspirators
425 and agitators, any rumors concerning the land always found a
627 ready response among the peasantry. It is for the same reason that often only a vague rumor about a government land decree was sufficient to convince the peasants that the land was given back to them by the Czar, but that it was the lesser government officials, bribed by the landlords, who kept the land out of their hands. Such land-hungry peasants, already inclined to rebel against age-long and humiliating dependency, were ready to take the law into their own hands, to seize the manorial lands, to loot the estates and to kill the landlords whenever they felt that the power of the existing authorities was crumbling.

178 The professional conspirators among the Russian revolution-
565 ary intelligentsia took full advantage of such inclinations. Their revolutionary plans were especially favored by the growing differentiation in the Russian villages. In the first decade of the twentieth century economic and social differentiation in the Great-Russian village was already well advanced. It was favored by a series of government measures (Stolypin reforms)[15] which were aimed at developing a stratum of independent and prosperous peasantry and destroying the system of communal landholding. As a result of such measures the Great-Russian village became by the first decade of this century composed of a number